AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the first paragraph of the Summary of the Invention (pp. 4-5 of the specification) with the following amended paragraph:

In an embodiment of the present invention, isolated bacteria or bacterial strains capable of oxidizing nitrite to nitrate are provided. In one embodiment, the 16S rDNA of the bacteria or bacterial strains has the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, SEQ ID NO:2, SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7 or SEQ ID NO:8. The nucleotide sequences described as SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2 are exemplary of *Nitrococcus*-like NOB, and the nucleotide sequences described as SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, and SEQ ID NO:8 are exemplary of *Nitrospira*-like NOB. The *Nitrococcus* ~~*mobilis*~~-like NOB represented by SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2 have been deposited on August 28, 2003 with the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) located at 10801 University Boulevard, Manassas, VA 20110-2209 and have been assigned accession number PTA-5424. The *Nitrospira*-like NOB represented by SEQ ID NO:3, SEQ ID NO:4, SEQ ID NO:5, SEQ ID NO:6, SEQ ID NO:7, and SEQ ID NO:8 have been deposited on August 28, 2003 with the American Type Culture Collection (ATCC) located at 10801 University Boulevard, Manassas, VA 20110-2209 and have been assigned accession number PTA-5422.